Kisan Credit Card Scheme

2652. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how many credit cards have so far been issued to farmers under the Kisan Credit Card Scheme launched by the Central Government;

(b) what is the number of farmers likely to be covered during 1999-2000 and target fixed therefor during Ninth Plan period under the said scheme; and

(c) whether Government have any figures of the amount of credit flow to farmers till date this year as compared to previous year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Declining production of pulses

2653. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a study conducted by the research wing of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India has revealed that the northern States are shifting from food to cash crop production as a result of which pulses are also set to go the onion way; and

(b) if so, the remedial measures under contemplation to increase the production of pulses which is a staple diet for the poor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India, New Delhi have informed that they have not made any specific study on shifting trends in agricultural production and that no statement has been made by them that the northern States are shifting towards cash crops.

The area under pulse and production of pulses in the country during the last 3 years is given below:

Year	Area (in lakh ha.)	Production (in lakh tonnes)
1996-97	224.47	142.44
1997-98	228.47	130.69
1998-99	229.17	147.88 (estimated)

(b) To enhance the pulse production in the country, pulses have been brought under the Technology Mission on Oil-seeds & Pulses. A scheme of National Pulses Development Project is being implemented for this purpose. Under the scheme, assistance is being provided for critical inputs like production & distribution of seeds, seed minikits, improved farm implements, rhyzobium culture, micro-nutrients, Integrated Pest Management and distribution of sprinkler sets etc. In addition, frontline and block demonstrations are also organised on farmers' fields for transfer of technology.

During IX Plan two important components viz. Gypsum as a source of sulphur to boost the production and productivity of pulses and use of Nuclear Polyhedrosis Virus (NPV) to control incidence of Pod Borer (Heliothis) which is the major pest of Gram and Arhar, have been included for assistance under National Pulses Development Project (NPDP).